1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19



Bats are plentiful, but they tend to be most abundant in the forests and hills close to the Orinoco. Armies of them fly nightly out of the caves of Guiana to feed on the fruit of the forests in the plains. One evening while crossing back from Guiana to the llanos we saw a stream of bats flying across the river. They seemed to come from a cave about 2 miles away. Though we watched them flying overhead for about half an hour, there did not seem to be any end to them.

Formerly the llanos were peopled by a number of tribes who have since disappeared, leaving behind them practically no knowledge of their societies. Only the Yaruros and the Guahibos inhabiting the Meta region have survived to this day. The Tamanachi, the Guamos, the Otomacos, which are best but meagerly known, have died or been killed off in recent years. I saw the last Otomaco survivors, an old woman and a boy of five, who had been saved from a reputed massacre. The Achaguas seem to have disappeared in recent years also. What has happened to these people can be easily understood when it is considered that during the past 25 years the worldwide unrest has driven adventurers to many corners of the earth, and these people have been exposed to the marauding "revolutionary" bands and to the equally destructive cupidity of the crocodile hunter and the rancher.

There are 150 Yaruros left in the region of the Capanaparo and on an island at the mouth of that river called the Linda Bara. It is claimed that on the Sinaruco there are other bands but no contact was made with them. Formerly the Yaruros occupied a large territory and perhaps roamed the plains, as well as the rivers, but since the land has been taken up by the ranchers they have been forced to the river banks.

The animals of greatest interest to the Yaruros are: jaguar, puma, wild pigs, capibara (the chiguire), armadillo, snakes, jivaro stork, vultures, manatee, tonino, crocodiles, iguana.

Plant life has great importance as a source of food, usable wood, medicines, and narcotics. The moriche and macanilla palms supply the Yaruros with fibers and bow wood. The chigua supplies him with flour; the changuango and barbaco with edible roots.

The Yaruros call themselves "Pumeh." In the literature they are referred to as "Saururi" (Gumilla), "Zavuri" (Gilii), and more recently as Jaruros, Sayuros, etc. According to my informants Yaruro or Jaruro, is a Guahibo word by which they are known to that people. The Guahibos are known to the Yaruros as "Tciricoa," "people of the forest." The word Pumeh has no exact translatable meaning. The closest equivalent is the Spanish "gente." When a Yaruro uses it he implies "the people," "the chosen people." Only the Yaruros are Pumeh, but the term occasionally includes other tribes. All non-

1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19



174 181 There is little to be found in the literature on the Yaruros. Among the missionaries they had the reputation of being too wild to tame. They were accused of being parricides and were called eaters of clay. The Tamanachi and the Otomacos seemed to have had a more complex economic culture and received much more attention from the missionaries; but the Yaruros, due to their own shyness, were considered to be scarcely human, and little was done with them. They seemed to be especially sensitive to any scolding or maltreatment. Gumilla, writing in 1791, says "Their fear, completely beyond reason, is the root of their inconstancy and is the dismay of all the writers: more delicate than glass; if they feel that the missionary has looked at them fixedly, if they hear a word less gentle, it is sure that they will run away and, moreover, will take with them the entire family." This statement may be an indication of the early treatment received by the Yaruros at the hands of the soldiers and missionaries. It is a fear which has persisted down through the centuries and is no less intense today.

152 177

197 Linguistically the Yaruros do not seem to be connected with any other South American group. On the basis of a few limited vocabularies several attempts have been made to link the Yaruros to the Saliva or the Betoya. An examination of the text produced in this study will show no obvious affinity to other language families. However, this is a matter for future study.[1]

## ARCHEOLOGY

172 The llanos of Apure have become legendary for many things, even archeologically. In the entire region no excavations have been conducted, but stories are current of the variety of archeological remains. The Calzada is probably the most famous of them all. According to verbal descriptions obtained from geologists and other visitors to the llanos, the Calzada has the appearance of an elevated roadbed running eastward for many miles from some point at the foot of the Andes. In it and in small mounds close by it has been reported that pottery and skeletal material have been found. There is no doubt that archeological remains are primitive. As we traveled about the country we found that most of the squatters had archeological pieces of varying degrees of interest. At La Trinchera there were even two amateur archeologists. One thing is certain, the archeological material which was uncovered, and which is being reported in another paper, has no relation to any of the Yaruro material. It is therefore certain that the Yaruros have not always occupied the region.

[1] See Bibliography.

1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19



174 It is well to note that the llanos form a sort of cul-de-sac from which there is only one escape, and that is by way of the Orinoco River. It is quite likely that the llanos have been the camping grounds and the highway for a number of tribes migrating northward, southward, or eastward. For peoples practicing agriculture, Guiana and the lower Orinoco region would be more suitable than the plains of Apure, where, on account of the strong winds and the sandy soil, it is difficult to carry on any cultivation of the soil. The mountainous regions to the north and west are also fit for agriculture. Therefore it was only the culturally poorer tribes that would remain in the llanos.

101 We have, therefore, in the following pages, a people who are primitive hunters, whose history is unknown, who do not seem to be linguistically related to any other group, and whose appearance is strongly mongoloid—who have been in contact not only with foreign indigenous culture but with some European culture, and who are facing

121 physical and cultural extinction. Perhaps this last fact should be allowed to dominate this study, because it can throw into relief much of Yaruro culture and will remind us that anthropology is not so much signs of things as the signs of man, and that his problems and the way he solves them is as important, if not more important, than purely historical problems and theories. The opportunity of studying religion, social organization, and general spiritual culture of a South American tribe was so strong that during my stay with the Yaruros I concentrated with these phases of their culture rather than on the material phases or linguistic problems.

## My Journey To and Life With the Yaruros

122 177 Contact with the Yaruros is not easy. No one ever knows near what water hole or at what point on the river these nomads may be found. Several centuries of maltreatment have made them shy and suspicious of strangers and particularly of all "Racionales." Primitive and loosely organized, they could not and cannot today offer any effective resistance to civilized groups which may want to exploit them. At the time of my visit everyone along our route was indignant over the treatment that about 150 Yaruros had received at the hands of unknown local "jefes civiles" about a month before. They were seized and matcheted to death, reducing the total population of this tribe (excluding bands that may be hidden along the Sinaruco River) to one-half. My presence in their midst naturally aroused fears that some fresh calamity was about to befall them.

In the rainy season there is only one way of penetrating the llanos of Apure, and that is by boat. From the Orinoco one can sail or

1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19



311 177 In the case of the Yaruros all of these factors have played an important role and are currently active in reducing their territories and food supply to a degree that will mean imminent extermination of the people. It is true that since the first settler arrived in their country the Yaruros could have made readjustments in their culture which perhaps might have permitted them to survive. They could have learned, for instance, to raise horses, cattle, and to cultivate the soil as the [178] Guajiros, living in a country similar to the llanos, have done. But they have chosen to remain firm in their own culture, own traditions, and own universe, and as a result are expecting to pay the penalty. Why they have failed to make the readjustment which would have brought them into a livable relationship with the newcomers and have persisted in keeping to their primitive, nomadic existence may be answered in the pages that follow.

361 Dependency on hunting, fishing, and gathering of edible fruits and roots imposes nomadism upon a people and prevents living together in large groups. The degree to which a people have to wander, the extent of the territory over which they must roam, and the size of the group, is dependent upon the abundance of the food supply in the region. The Yaruro hunting groups are small and they stay in one camp not more than a few days; so, they are to be met plying up and down the river in their canoes or traveling over land to the water holes, ever hunting for food.

### HUNTING TERRITORIES

224 621 596 Each hunting group has a territory over which it is free to roam. Over this region only its members are allowed to hunt and gather fruits and roots, but the rivers, the main streams, are open to all. The accompanying map shows the limits of the present hunting territory [174] of the Yaruros of the Capanaparo. It would seem that anciently, when the Yaruros were more numerous, they roamed over a vaster region cut up into small portions over which hunting rights were distributed among various hunting family groups. I was assured that the Yaruros of the Sinaruco also have divided their country into family units.

619 101 There is also a sort of division among the Yaruros which transcends family grouping. The Yaruros of the Capanaparo, for instance, consider themselves a unit, though loosely bound, as distinct from the Yaruros of the Sinaruco, so that they consider the land drained by the Capanaparo as theirs and the region drained by the Sinaruco as the land of the Yaruros of that river. And yet, above all this, there seems to be a tribal feeling as opposed to the tribal divisions. The real significance of this is that among the Yaruros there is permitted a degree of mutuality in the use of the hunting rights

6:Le Besnerais--1 E-5 (1947-1950) 1962 SS19 Yaruro SS19

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# Contribution to the Study of the Yaruro and Otomac Indians (Venezuela)

continuation II (1)

1. See "infra" IV List...36.

I. Notes on the origins, way of life, and history of the Yaruro.
II. Notes on the Otomaco /Otomac/.
III. Complementary observations on the habitat of the Yaruro.
IV. List of works and diverse documents relating to the study of the Yaruro and the Otomaco.
V. Corrections for the first part of this study /omitted in the translation of this second part, but incorporated in the translation of the first part/ (1).

1. See "infra" IV List...36.

## I. Notes on the origins, way of life, and history of the Yaruro.

### a) Origins

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We do not yet know all about the origin and the pre-Colombian past of the Yaruro. Have they lived since the most remote times on the territory which they now occupy (1) or,

1. See "infra" IV List ... 36.

on the contrary, did they come to settle there at a less distant period, and in this case, how and why? Were they formerly powerful, numerous, and masters of a vast territory--their present-day descendants let it be understood--and, if so, what vicissitudes have reduced them to the present small group? Are the excesses of their civilized neighbors and the epidemics

/7 cont./

121 carried by the latter the only causes for it, as was the case
174 for numerous tribes after the arrival of the Spaniards, or should one also search for other more distant ones?

/8/ Our investigations have not furnished us with any direct answer to these questions. We should not try to give any as long as there have not been carried out comparative studies of language--up to the present their dialect has not been linked with any of the known large linguistic families of South America --and culture with the other societies of tropical South America--and perhaps also of more distant regions. As for the ties which might have united them formerly with the Otomaco, for the same reasons we cannot say more about them than what they say themselves (see "infra": II Notes on the Otomaco) as a complement to Angel Rosenblat's study on the Otomaco and Taparita (2).

2. Id. 54.

b) Way of life

114 Relying on Vicenzo Petrullo's investigations (3), Alfred
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3. Id. 52.

Métraux (4) extends to the Yaruro the alternative he poses with

4. Id. 45.

regard to the way of life of certain tribes occupying the drainage basin of the Orinoco and the Amazon, which contrasts by its primitiveness--the absence of agriculture and nomadism--with that of the majority of the tribes of these same regions, who practice agriculture (5). He writes: "Are these Indians

/8 cont./

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5. This paragraph had been published when we learned of Anthony Leeds' articles (see "infra" IV List...42 and 43). The latter considers that agriculture, which exists among the Yaruro, as we acknowledge further along, was introduced by missionaries at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

descendants of the first inhabitants, hunters and gatherers who invaded South America at the beginning of the Neolithic Age, as Father Cooper suggests, or are they groups of Indians who after diverse vicissitudes have degenerated and adapted their civilization to a new way of life, as Levi-Strauss insists?"

121 Immigrants or not, hunters, fishers, and gatherers who evolved, or agriculturists who regressed, we shall not make a choice here between these alternatives and shall limit ourselves to presenting two observations which, gone into more deeply, will eventually permit opting in favor of one of the theses before us.

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241 1) The tropical savanna inhabited by the Yaruro, as a consequence of the absence of extensive forests, is hardly propitious for primitive agriculture. The latter could, however, be carried out there on a small scale.

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241 The Yaruro, in fact, and contrary to Vicenzo Petrullo's observations, are not only gatherers, fishers, and hunters, but also practice agriculture, in general on land cleared in the forest corridors. Petrullo probably did not observe this aspect of their way of life (6) because he carried out his investigations

6. We made, moreover, the identical error in the course of our first investigations (see "infra" IV List...40).

at the height of the dry season--when the soil /9/ is no longer

7: Leeds E-4, 5. (1958) 1964 SS19 Yaruro SS19



constitute incest. I believe one can show from Petrullo's own genealogies that either incest occurred, possibly as a result of the process of depopulation, or that clan exogamy did not exist at all, since there were no clans, and the marriages concerned were not incestuous.

A third important feature that Petrullo asserts existed among the Yaruro is matrilateral cross-cousin marriage. Aside from the fact that, associated with the matriliny Petrullo's matriclans would possess, one would theoretically expect patrilateral cross-cousin marriage, if preferential cross-cousin marriage existed at all, I was unable to confirm unilateral cross-cousin marriage preferences but got statements of preference for bilateral cross-cousin marriage as well as reports of bilateral cross-cousin marriage and bilateral marriages between an ego and a parallel cousin's offspring.[2]

A fourth important feature discussed by Petrullo is totemism. The clans are assertedly connected respectively with the snake god Poanã and the jaguar god, Tió. Not only was I unable to confirm this, but the ethnographic evidence, on the whole, appears to contradict it directly. Totemism, for example, would be quite inconsistent with the social organization of the *toŋ'be* ceremony, the central socio-religious institution of the Yaruro which I have described elsewhere (1960, 1961 *b;* cf., also, Le Besnerais, 1951, 1950 *b,* and, with Dreyfus-Roche, 1954).

Thus we have not only ethnographic disagreement among three observers, but also the theoretical improbability of the original description which attaches matrilineal clanship to hunting and gathering nomadism, and to matrliateral cross-cousin marriage. Virtually all further published anthropological material on the Yaruro has taken the Petrullo report at face value. Some of these publications include a caveat about the report, but, unfortunately, others have, explicitly or implicitly, assumed its correcteness since they have used it as the starting point for historical, functional, or evolutionary reconstructions.[3]

Specifically the assertion is repeatedly made by Steward, Kirchhoff, and Steward and Faron that the Yaruro are one of a series of marginal tribes left over from an earlier wave of settlement and occupying interstitial areas among more advanced peoples. Steward (1946-1950, in various passages, esp. Vol. 5, pp. 678 *ff.*) tries to justify the marginal classification generally by designating characteristic traits present as well as those that should be absent. The Yaruro possess a large number of the latter, including horticulture, basketry, canoes,

[2] The theoretical expectation of *patrilateral* cross-cousin marriage with matriliny is discussed in Homans and Schneider (1955, especially pp. 56-57) and elsewhere. The preference for bilateral marriage with cross-cousins or with offspring of parallel cousins is also found among the Jivaro (cf. Steward and Métraux, 1948, especially p. 626). This fact, with a great many similar traits of social organization and world view shared by the two cultures, is of considerable interest to the cultural origin of the groups discussed later in the paper where other parallels are mentioned.

[3] Cf. Kirchhoff, 1948, *a:* Steward, 1946-1950; Vol. 3, pp. 897-899; Vol. 5, pp. 669-679, *et passim;* Steward and Faron, 1959; Layrisse, *et al.,* 1961; Needham, 1960; Murdock, 1957.

7: Leeds E-4, 5 (1958) 1964 SS19 Yaruro SS19



114 thatched houses, pottery, etc., all of which are, according to Steward, Tropical
174 Forest traits, consistent with that possession of horticulture which Le Besnerais and I both found for the Yaruro. Kirchhoff (1948 *a*: 456) and Steward (1946-1950: Vol. 5, p. 680) try to reinforce this argument by stating that Gilij's Eighteenth Century mention of the Yaruro's practice of eating green corn is proof of their recently having acquired corn-planting.

One can, just as well, argue to the contrary that, had they borrowed corn-use from the Spanish or any tribe long-accustomed to the utilization of corn, they would never have thought of using it green at all but rather yellow in the manner of their cultural creditors. Judging by both historical and present-day reports[4] of raiding, a pattern which appears to have been substantially elaborated in the area, we may argue that the use of green corn was one way of saving the crop from neighboring human predators and possibly from animal ones as well. In other words, eating green corn can well be considered an adaptive use of corn, possibly in an old pattern, given the ecological relationships of the area.

The Layrisse, *et al.*, article (1961) dismisses the horticulture that Le Besnerais and I find as being of recent origin but gives no basis for this judgement except that it makes more consistent their correlation of a population having a low or absent Diego antigen frequency with an older culture-layer and with various asserted linguistic connections. Such a procedure is scientifically not valid as proof, however useful it may be to set up hypotheses.

## II

174 Clearly the only *final* resolutions to the ethnographic discrepancies are historical ones, however much logic may convince us that the introduction of horticulture to all Yaruro groups and its integration even into their mythology and social life in the fifteen years between Petrullo's and Le Besnerais' visits is unlikely. As for the social organization problem, all possible documentary evidence must be brought to bear.

Three major sources of historical reconstruction are potentially available — archeology, lingustics, and written history — as well as several minor lines of evidence.

174 First, linguistic reconstruction of genetic relationships would provide us
197 with better hypotheses. If Greenberg's tentative classification (1956; cf., also, Steward and Faron, 1959: 22-23) is correct, the Yaruro are related to the Jívaro, the Cofan, the extinct Esmeralda speakers, and others, all of whom were, or are, actively horticultural peoples though the last named were also

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[4] Cf. both Kirchhoff, 1948 *b*, and the sources he cites; Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1961; also my own observations.

. 7: Leeds E-4, 5 (1958) 1964 SS19 Yaruro SS19



significantly hunters and fishers. The distribution of these peoples suggests a geographical radiation from a common location that is implied as well by the relationships among the languages — probably from the west or southwest of present Yaruro country. Work on the centuries of separation, on the degrees of relationship of these languages among themselves and to other groups of the putative Andean-Equatorial family is urgently needed as is archeology in the supposed area of radiation.

Second, archeology would provide most interesting evidence. Petrullo (1939 *b*) collected a series of artifacts, mainly potsherds, which suggest a degree of culture well beyond minimal Tropical Forest level. Le Besnerais (Ms.) mentions not only the variety of potsherds to be found but also polished stone axes and funerary urns (cf., also, Vernau, 1901). I myself saw an immense number of crude, friable, slipped potsherds; many potsherds generally of the Arauquín type; a polished stone celt; a polished stone mano, beautifully made (cf. photo), and so on. None of these objects, except the crude potsherds, have been found in situ, but the Indians assert that they dig them up all the time.

The archeological items would suggest that cultures previously in the area, whether Yaruro or not, were horticultural. Though no archeology of any kind has been done in the South Venezuelan llanos, these meager indications suggest that the Kirchhoff-Steward hypothesis is erroneous since the Yaruro of our times could not be a remnant of aboriginal hunters and gatherers if the area was previously at a much higher cultural level. The general hypotheses of Cruxent and Rouse (1958-1959: 263 *ff.*) — especially that relating to a fusion between a western corn area and an eastern manioc area — would further tend to cast doubts on the whole Handbook scheme since the obvious routes for this fusion to have taken place are the great east-west llanos rivers. Archeological work is desperately needed here, and seems to me of central theoretical importance. It is hard to understand why so many workers have skirted the area.[5]

Before turning to written history I wish to take up some minor lines of evidence which are suggestive for the resolution of the ethnographic discrepancies. One has to do with the content of the ideology. Quite a number of items such as the earth mother, the ancestor cult, the serpent rainbow, the anaconda god, and so on (cf., Antolínez, 1939; Steward and Métraux, 1948, esp. p. 628; etc.), appear to connect the Yaruro with tribes to the west and southwest including the Chibcha and the Jívaro.

[5] No one has done systematic work in the llanos. Only sporadic finds have been made there (e. g., Petrullo, 1939 *b*; Vernau, 1901). The intensive archeological fieldwork has all been in the great circle around the llanos (cf. a great many works by Cruxent cited in Cruxent and Rouse, 1958-1959; Evans and Meggers, n.d.; Howard, 1943; Kidder, 1944; Marcano, 1893; Meggers and Evans, 1955; Osgood, 1943; Osgood and Howard, 1943; Rouse, 1956; Rouse and Cruxent, 1957, and many other Rouse articles listed in Cruxent and Rouse, 1958-1959. Cf., also, unpublished work by P. Gallagher, by M. Sanoja, and by E. Wagner.

7: Leeds E-4, 5 (1958) 1964 SS19 Yaruro SS19



Second is the rate of deculturation. It is quite clear from comparing the material culture items observed by Petrullo with those that I observed, as well as from the present distribution of culture traits, which shows a gradient of trait loss as one goes from less acculturated to more acculturated groups, that the Yaruro once had a more elaborate culture content than at present. Though temporal extrapolations backwards can of course only be securely made by means of the written historical sources, items gleaned here and there from sources so far examined tend to confirm the inference from spatial distributions.[6] The implication of this is that the Yaruro were formerly considerably more complex, at least in their cultural content if not also in their cultural structure, than at the periods of ethnographic observation.

Third, a series of arguments concerning the ecological relations of the Yaruro to the land, and of the various tribes to each other and the food supply, could be presented which would suggest ecological specialization by tribal or subtribal groups among the Yaruro, Sáliva, Guahibo, Kuiva, Achagua, and Otomaco, all in a complex system (cf. Kirchhoff, 1948 *b*).

Fourth, an interesting ecological argument can be made which would resolve the disagreement about horticulture: that Petrullo's statement regarding horticulture might possibly be correct for the small, highly special area he studied and — the Orinoco sand bars and the estuary of the Capanaparo River in which wet-season flooding appears to be exceedingly extensive, hence sharply limiting horticultural possibilities — but that they do not apply to other zones of the llanos which do not have the ecological peculiarities of the river-mouth area.[7] I have discussed some aspects of this in previous publications, especially with regard to the importance of flooding, the area of gallery forest available for horticulture, and the pattern of transhumance (Leeds, 1961 *a*, especially pp. 13-18). An ecological-geographical survey of the entire region between the Orinoco highlands and the Andean spurs to the west is needed.

## III

We may now turn to the question of written historical evidences. No published work on the Yaruro or the llanos has made use of much more than a dozen

[6] Cf. Crévaux, 1883: 370; Carriazo, 1910: 39; Acosta Saignes, 1961: 97, etc., as well as the loss of culture traits observable between Petrullo's and my visits.

[7] That this area is rather unique is clearly indicated by many maps which represent it as entirely flooded or as a welter of water-ways (cf. Gumilla, 1791). Acosta Saignes, in a foreword to Carvajal, points out that it was quite simple to mistake one river for another since, at least during the rainy season, they all flowed into each other near the mouth. The flooding makes any ordinary gardening impossible for a large part of the year. The hypothesis tends, however, to be contradicted by Le Besnerais's findings (1954; also, Leeds, 1961 *a*). It may be noted that in the almost absolutely flat Guachara area, between the Cunaviche and Arauca rivers, at the Indian village of Palmarito- much of the llanos floods. The loamy-mud soils are excellent for crops, but crops are only grown in those areas which remain a few inches or a foot or two above highest rainy-season water-level.

7: Leeds E-4, 5 (1958) 1964 SS19 Yaruro SS19



social features reported, ideological features reported, and relations with other tribes mentioned. The card sets will be arranged by geographical location of the tribe so that for any given time period one may pull out all the sets and arrange the tribes in their spatial order. Thus for any time period a picture of the trait distributions, cultural-ecological conditions, inter-tribal socio-ecological relations, and acculturational-social contacts and events should be obtainable.

## V

Though, to date, I have been concerned mainly with collecting bibliography and documentary materials rather than with their analysis, I should like to hazard several very tentative conclusions, or perhaps guesses, with respect to the ethnohistory of the llanos, and particularly of the Yaruro, based on the geographic, ethnographic, archeological, linguistic, and historical data known to me now. Some, however, are presented more as hypotheses for proof or disproof through continued research.

First, Petrullo's description is erroneous at least as respects the subsistence economy. Late Nineteenth Century travellers like Crévaux and Vela and several persons in this century mention horticulture. Still earlier reports go back to the earlier Eighteenth Century when missionaries speak of horticulture. Their reports apply to the Yaruro, Otomaco, Guahibo, and other groups. It has not yet been possible to decide whether they introduced or found horticulture among these peoples. Petrullo's error appears to have several explanations:

*A)* That he was incapacitated for several weeks by sore feet and was unable to travel about the land away from the rivers. In my experience, a careful criss-crossing of the land on foot is an absolute necessity if one is to know how these peoples carry on their subsistence activities. I have paced off with a pedometer the entire area used by the group I worked with. In the course of so doing I discovered all kinds of gardens, houses, and other evidences of their land use. These would not otherwise have been discovered by an observer nor mentioned by the Yaruro, since mainly what is physically present is, to them, worthy of mention.[10] I should say a great portion of my most important data came from such accidental discoveries made while walking about.

[10] I would stand at a certain spot in a garden and ask "Whose garden is this?" "Juan's." Then I might walk perhaps ten feet and say, "Juan keeps his garden well." "But this is not Juan's garden." "You just said that this was Juan's garden." "That was over there on the other side of that row of corn." This happened a number of times. I also asked once, "Is there female shamanism here?" "No." Several days later, a group from an neighboring village came to visit. After an all-night session of the *tou'be*, several women performed shamanistic rites. I said, "I thought you said there is no female shamanism here?" "There isn't anyone here [i. e. in our locality] who practices — these women are from upstream." The same cleaving to locus was observed with respect to time. I was told that Miguel was a shaman ("musico"). I said "Miguel, are you not a musico?" "I am not a musico. I cannot sing." A few weeks later, he was singing. I said,

7: Leeds E-4, 5 (1958) 1964 SS19 Yaruro SS19



*B)* Petrullo restricted his visits to the sand banks along and in the river, and, after his first arrival, most of his travelling was done on the streams. Gardens are never to be found on the sand banks and bars, but rather, usually, on the affluent creeks which are just above flood level of the rivers in the rainy season. Therefore he was not in a position to see the gardens which Le Besnerais later saw in the same area when he explored back from the river.

*C)* Petrullo was in the llanos in the dry season when the Yaruro move nearer the rivers both to secure a water supply as the water table lowers and to avail themselves of the much more plentiful and accessible river fauna[11] at a time when vegetable harvests are reduced because of drought. He was therefore observing dry-season subsistence — and perhaps only a part of it.

*D)* The probability that he observed only a part of the dry-season subsistence pattern in his area is reinforced by two considerations:

*1)* He reports the fact that 150 Yaruro had been massacred by Venezuelans a month before his arrival (p. 181). Their response under such circumstances is, as fast as possible, to get off the land that the Venezuelans want and to move to the rivers. I myself had occasion to observe such a diaspora, occurring in response to a smaller massacre. In view of this sort of response, it is likely, therefore, that Petrullo's group was living off river resources and away from their gardens at the time of his visit.

*2)* Maps indicate that in the lower part of the Capanaparo River, the flooding is greater and the number and size of side creeks suitable for horticulture is smaller than upstream on any of the large rivers. In other words, the available area for garden plots is much smaller, and riverine subsistence proportionately more important. Upriver, and more especially on the Sinaruco and on the middle and upper Cunaviche and Arauca rivers, there is much more tillable ground.

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"I thought you said you could not sing and were not a musico?" "Yes, that was true last week when I had the grippe, but now my grippe is better I can be a musico again." And many similar examples of the extreme caution one needed to exercise regarding negative responses in order to be sure they were not merely descriptive of the place and moment. If Petrullo asked "Do you raise crops?", his informants would most likely have said, "No, we have no crops here", under the circumstances in which he found them.

[11] The river fauna is more plentiful and accessible in dry season because, first, it is more concentrated, and, second, it is more visible. During the wet, flooding season, fish, and other animals spread even into smaller streams and out upon the watery llanos — we caught a small piranha on the grassy, watercovered plain itself. On the plains, the fish are lost among the grasses and are virtually impossible to spear or shoot with bow and arrow. The river turbulence of the rainy season, meanwhile, has brought so much mud from further upstream that many of the rivers are opaque, especially in those parts of the llanos constructed of mud rather than sandy soils. Fish and the water reptiles and mammals are well-cloaked by the murky stream. The waters and the plains clear in the dry season so that the fish are concentrated in the limpid, grassless waters of the rivers, while land animals and riparian fauna are all crowded together near the banks in their search for food and water.

7: Leeds E-4, 5 (1958) 1964 SS19 Yaruro SS19
Guahibo SC14



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Petrullo's own linguistic data includes the words for corn, *(pwe)*, manioc *(pae)*, and other planted foods. The words for corn and manioc are certainly not word borrowings from Spanish. This tends to confirm the hypothesis of an aboriginal presence at least of these crops.

G Y 174 22 241

A second point is that Yaruro and Guahibo subsistence is transhumant, consisting of a wet-season gardening predominance and a dry-season hunting and/or fishing predominance. Guahibo, both presently and in various historical sources,[12] are described as being horticulturalists as well as hunters. It is of first importance to note which season is being discussed when the tribal subsistence is being described. With this sort of transhumance, one would expect the decriptions in the literature to disagree; as they do, according to the season of description. Similarly there is much local ecological variation, which appears to determine variations in the predominance of horticulture or hunting or fishing or collecting.

G 721 433

Third, the various tribes — Yaruro, Guahibo, Kuiva, Síliva, Achagua, and possibly the Otomaco, as well as more distant groups - - maintained a complex ecological relationship to llanos and extra-llanos resources by means of three major institutions, trade, war, and raiding. For example Kuiva, described by my Yaruro informants and others as being "muy brabos",[13] even today raid both Guahibo and Yaruro villages, but apparently only when these are well supplied, *after* harvesting (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1961). That is, they drain off a certain amount of the harvest surplus (cf. Leeds 1961 *a*: 23) from the horticultural groups. With this food, they are able to maintain a larger population in the hunting areas away from the rivers, which they regularly inhabit. Presumably it also compels or encourages the groups concerned to produce more as a hedge against such depredations, thus contributing to overall population maximinization. The raiding pattern may also account for the use of green corn as remarked before.

G 174 721

At the same time, the Guahibo raid Yaruro gardens as the corn and manioc ripen, but are limited from so doing by the frequent presence of Yaruro in their gardens during the harvest period and by the distance of the gardens from the Guahibo villages. The Guahibo were also reported as formerly having carried on extensive warfare, which, it is my guess, had a subsistence foundation (cf. Kirchhoff, 1948 *b*). The peaceable Yaruro, on the other hand, have apparently always done a considerable amount of trading up and down river in their canoes. Trade is also reflected archeologically in the stone artifacts mentioned above, since the kinds of stones used are not found in the llanos and must come from extra-llanos sources.

Y [439]

Y 174 182

In short, the entire llanos area appears to me a complex ecological system involving hunting, gathering, fishing, and horticulture, with trade, raiding,

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[12] Cf. Crévaux, 1883; Marcano, 1883; Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1944; Vela, 1889; Wilbert, 1957.

[13] Cf. Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1961. He described the generally harsh behavior of the men, the raiding pattern, and the rough manhandling he received from the women.

7: Leeds E-4, 5 (1958) 1964 SS19 Yaruro SS19



and warfare as supra-tribal distribution mechanisms. It is interesting to note that the cultural characteristics ascribed to each of the peoples — "warlike," "peaceable," "brabo" — are ecologically funcional, in that they mirror value orientations which tend to drive people to maximize the food resources in ways appropriate to their socio-ecological environments.

Fourth, the evidence seems to me at present to point to the existence throughout the area, of pre-hispanic horticulture, enjoyed by at least some groups within each tribe, if not by all groups in part of every year. The evidence comes from the reports of travellers, missionaries, and from the archeological remnants, such as they at present are. The main Spanish and Venezuelan acculturational effects with respect to subsistence appear to have been the introduction of iron tools; seeds and plants not of native origin, such as sugar cane and bananas; and, here and there, cattle, pigs, or chickens.

Fifth, the evidence suggests a steady deculturation in an area capable of maintaining a more elaborate level of culture. One may hypothesize either that groups like the Yaruro came into the area with a level of culture reflected by the Arauquín-style remants and then gradually deculturated both pre-hispanically and in post-conquest times, to their present level, or that they intruded into such a culture at a time when they themselves were at a more elaborate level, and then deculturated largely under Spanish influence. It will probably be possible to shed light on this question with the historical data.

In summary, if these hypotheses are correct, the entire interpretation of the llanos area between the Andes and the Orinoco highlands, as well as of other nearby areas assertedly inhabited by so-called marginal tribes, is quite different from that presented by the *Handbook of South American Indians*. The marginals of northern South America seem to evanesce, and a picture of a highly complex ecological system in which horticulture is of central importance, even if not quantitatively predominant in this ecologically restricted area, appears. This picture seems to conform better to the recent archeological hypotheses of Cruxent and Rouse (1958-1959), to the historical mentions of horticulture, to the presently scanty archeological and linguistic materials, and to more recent ethnological data.

I have not, as yet, been able to make any determination whatever with respect to clanship, totemism, or matricross-cousin marriage. I hope that with a study of the word lists discovered and with possible older ethnographic data that this problem may be resolved. My own field data suggests an organization into demes with bilateral marriages between cross-cousins or between an ego and his parallel cousin's offspring. This interpretation incidentally tallies with, or at least does not contradict, the data, such as the genealogies, kin terminology, and locality features described by Petrullo in all pasages where inferences and assertions as to the existence of these institutions do not occur.